

Closing Abandoned Wells

By Luke Terry, Director

The Kickapoo Environmental Office was awarded a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency to locate and close abandoned wells on Tribal lands. This project will involve scouting for wells, measuring the depth and diameter and then closing or capping of abandoned wells that are harmful to the environment or unsafe for young children and pets.

An initial open well inventory within the reservation has compiled up to 28 wells that either need to be closed or capped. At one time, every rural house or farmstead used hand dug or drilled wells to supply water. Over time tribal and rural water systems have become more popular and more efficient to supply quality drinking water, thus wells were abandoned and left open. By leaving a well open, a direct channel to ground is present. Large amounts of surface water can easily enter the groundwater causing contamination. Several wells identified are very old hand dug wells which can have a diameter of 6-10 feet and be 15-20 feet deep. In some cases, the hand dug wells are large enough to fit a compact car in! This is a very serious concern for small children, hunters, pets or anyone who might accidentally fall in causing injury or death.



Over the next 2-3 months the Environmental Office will be asking for assistance in identifying any open wells on your property. Well closing will begin in April or May 2013. If you have a well and wish to have it closed, please call the Environmental Office. There will be no charge for closing the well. If you would like to keep a well open for future use, but the lid or foundation around the casing isn't adequate, we can assist with securing a lid or cover over the casing to keep pesticides, animals and whatever else might flow or fall into the well casing out. Leaving wells open is a serious hazard and by working together we can make the reservation safer for everyone.

Luke can be reached at (785) 486-2601 x 1 or by e-mail at luke.terry@ktik-nsn.gov.

New Staff Member Joins the Crew

By Sonny Fee, Solid Waste Coordinator



Hello! My name is Sonny Fee and I am the new Solid Waste Coordinator for the Kickapoo Environmental Office. I am a Kickapoo tribal member as well as a life time resident here on the reservation. I am a 1994 graduate of KNS and went on to graduate from Atchison Vo-Tech for welding in 1996. For the past 7 years, I've been employed by Hammersmith MFG & Sales in Horton, KS where I worked as a painter, machine operator and staffed the burn room. I enjoy spending time fishing and hunting with my two sons. I work with a great crew here at the Kickapoo Environmental Office. My plans are to get more recycling and waste reduction at Kickapoo Nation School, Golden Eagle Casino as well as at the tribal programs.

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Where Does Water Pollution Come From?

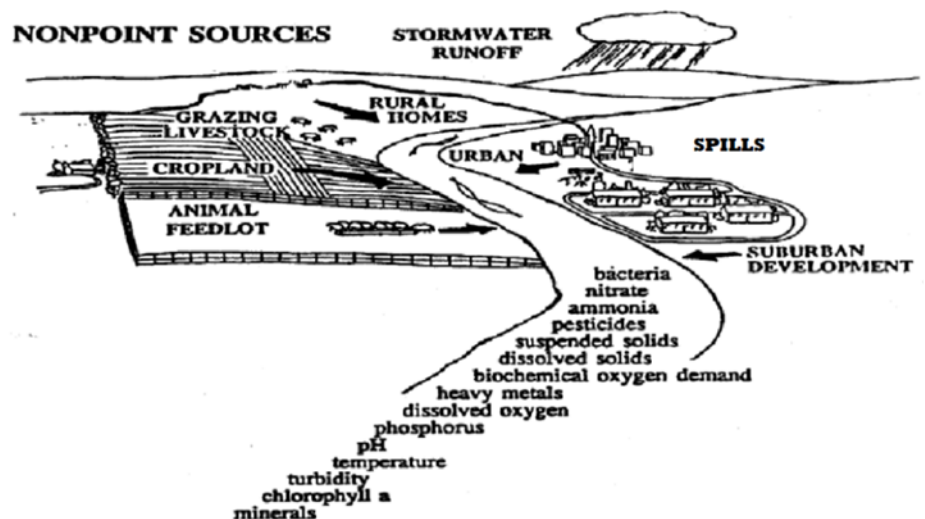
By Kerry Wedel, Watershed Coordinator

Lakes, streams and wetlands can be polluted from numerous pollutants that come from a variety of sources. Potential sources of water pollution generally fall into two categories: point sources and nonpoint sources. **Point source** refers to a source that pollutes a body of water at a discrete location or "point" such as a pipe or other discharge structure, like a municipal wastewater treatment facility. These sources are typically regulated through state or federal permits that limit the amount of pollution discharged to receiving water bodies.

Nonpoint source pollution refers to a more spread out source where pollutants are washed off the land surface by runoff from rain or snow. Nonpoint sources of pollution are typically not regulated by state or federal permits. Examples of nonpoint pollution sources include parking lots, home lawns and agricultural fields where materials containing potential pollutants such as motor fluids, fertilizers, pesticides and animal waste, are present.

The following diagram shows several examples of common nonpoint sources of pollution and various pollutants that can be carried to lakes and streams by storm water runoff. Nonpoint source pollutants can cause a number of environmental concerns such as excessive algae growth in lakes and streams resulting in taste and odor problems in drinking water; excessive bacteria in untreated water which can cause illness if ingested; and reduced oxygen levels in lakes and streams which can cause harm to fish and other aquatic species.

Example of Point Source Pollution



The Kickapoo Environmental Office has initiated a program to promote the implementation of "best management practices" by landowners and citizens to help prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution affecting the Kickapoo community's water resources. More information about program activities will be available at the KEO's booth at upcoming events including the Kickapoo Health Fair, Earth Day and Environmental Day.

For more information, contact Kerry Wedel at the Kickapoo Environmental Office, 785-486-2601 x 3, kerry.wedel@ktik.nsn.gov.